Wellesley College News
LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

No. 9 **MAY 28, 1925**

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

I. The Store

Our neighborhood store is just across the car tracks at the end of our street. It is kept downstairs in a tall, dark house much in need of painting. According to the season of the year, the front windows are filled with Christmas cards, valentines, flower seeds, or firecrackers. Inside are two glass show-cases opposite each other. One of them is the candy counter, where my eyes always wandered on my visits to the store, while the other holds the ugly hard chocolate that I used to tease for, not because it looked good, but because I wanted to try everything once. My mother never satisfied my curiosity. That, she said, was tobacco. On the candy counter still stands, though its prosperous days are over, the turning rack to hold post cards. Often have I gravely moved it about while trying to decide between an Easter bunny and a chicken for my grandfather. At the end of the room are the tiers of cookie tins. Here I waited while the peanut butter was being weighed out and tried to calculate whether I had money enough for half a pound each of the pink frosted cookies at thirty-nine cents a pound and the cocoanut doughnuts at forty-two. In the middle of the floor is the big, glass-topped pickle barrel with the pretty little strainer to scoop out pickles with, and the beautiful vinegary smell.

Miss Annie and Miss Nellie Regan keep our neighborhood store. I used to think they looked alike because they were both plump and trim and black-haired, but I soon learned to know Nellie because she had to call up the back stairs for the prices of the cans of peas. Annie was the one who gave Margaret and me six cents' worth of candy for a nickel because an even number divided better between two of us, and who put the cat's salmon can inside a paper bag on Sundays because her Sunday license was only for cigars and confectionery. Both Miss Regans knew the name of every child who ever came into the store, as well as the doings of all our neighborhood. Friendlier people never lived.

The Miss Regan's business had prospered so well that they had taken a little girl about my age to live with them, besides bringing up the two daughters of their brother in New York. They had ambitions for their girls. Florence was not good at books, but she was to go to Notre Dame and study music. I often heard her practicing upstairs. Agnes was to take the high school commercial course and become a stenographer. Helen, the little one, who drew pictures in the frost on the windows, was either to go to Normal Art School or study textile designing. Miss Annie and Miss Nellie are as trim and black-haired and friendly as ever, but the years have slipped by while they still dreamed about them, and now all three of their girls work at the switchboard in the telephone office.

II. Mrs. Gookin

"Mis' Babcock!"

"Mornin' Mis' Babcock. You folks able to sleep last night? I should say *so*. I never heard the like before those Barons moved into the neighborhood. Out in the middle of the street at one and two o'clock in the mornin', hollerin' and shriekin' like maniacs. They had a light in the cellar, too, and the men kept goin' down. I didn't see any of the women go. And let me tell you one thing, Mis' Babcock, she wouldn't be havin' parties like that if Phil was at home. He works nights now in a garage down town. I never knew a man who worked harder for his family. And those poor children! That little Mary, seven years old, swears like a trooper. Wonder what Mis' Baron did with them last night. Frank vows he'll have the police down here if we have to put up with that racket another night.

"Mis' Cornell hasn't said anything to you about their buyin' that lot next to us, has she? You know we've been tryin' to get it for some time to put up a garage for the new truck, but the owner, out-of-town man he is, wouldn't sell. Well, Julia must have got wind of it somehow, for the next thing we knew, the lot was sold to her. Pretty mean to your own neighbors, I call it. These people with the idea they're too good to have a truck within a mile o' their back yard!

"Why, hello, Freddy, when did you come over? Yes, Grammy's comin' right home in a minute. That youngster's the cutest child, Mis' Babcock. Only four he is, and he said to me the other day, 'Grammy, what's this Peapod Dome everybody's talkin' about?' Now where do you suppose he picked that up? He's cute, he is. Mis' Johnson asked him yesterday what his folks were going to name the baby. 'I don' know,' says he, 'but *I* like Woof.' And you know Fred and Catherine are talkin' of namin' her Ruth. When he's a big man he's goin' to go to school and have a Packard, aren't you, Freddy? Yes, dearie, I'm comin'. We'll go right down to Grammy's house and get some cake. Come over and help yourself to our rhubub any time you want some, Mis' Babcock. We've got more than we know what to do with."

HANNAH ADAMS, 1926.

SONNET TO SETEBOS

Because the blind, relentless strength of earth,
Encompassing the body, binds too fast
The struggling soul; so giving anguished birth
To brilliant fantasies of dreams, at last
The spirit beats its prison like a bird.
Vain silver-throated swallow! spill your song
Into the world. And singing, leave a word
Of all the swift, wide-swinging winds you long
To follow—whirling paces of the spheres—
Great, grinding poles of sky. Cease asking why
And ever wherefore, lest, perceiving tears,
The master's fulgent needle pierce your eye. . . . .
And yet—with only restful dark to meet
Your sight, your melodies might sound more sweet.

QUASI UNA FANTASIA

The concert was rather boring, as even concerts sometimes, are. People coughed, or rustled little papery things, or shifted a cramped position for a more comfortable one. There were a few youthful music-lovers who went into the usual spiritual trance, letting their thoughts flit, butterfly fashion, across the day's landscape.

The Highly Improbable Gentleman and the Quite Impossible Lady sat side by side, but being strangers, they did not speak. It would not have been proper to do so, although I doubt whether propriety would have made any difference to either of them, improbable and impossible as they were. Now although the Highly Improbable Gentleman was a professed woman-hater by all outward manifestation, it was quite probable that he was not above casting a sidewise glance in the direction of the lady, if only for the purpose of analysing her manner of dress. Unfortunately the style of hat in vogue just then was such that it afforded a very meager profile view; in fact, as far as the Highly Improbable Gentleman was concerned there was only hat, and a very delicately outlined and carefully powdered nose. However, the inventory of hat, nose, shoulders, coat, dress, and hands was

encouraging even to a confirmed womanhater: the hat was satisfactory, but not startling; the nose was of medium size, rather slender, as noses go, and also entirely satisfactory; the shoulders were slim, a little hunched against the seat; the coat was soft and gray, and its soft gray lining was an undulating background against which the straight, slim lines of her arms stood out. Her dress was an indefinable color, the color of the sea when someone contradicts you for calling it blue or green, and you compromise on gray to avoid unpleasantness. Last of all, her hands were long and slenderly fashioned, and quite pale, glistering with a single opal set curiously in tiny pearls and twisted gold. And these fingers were curved about a battered copy of—not the Cosmopolitan Magazine nor the poems of Joyce Kilmer, but the fantastic *Tales* of Lord Dunsany.

The music travelled to an ending. A burst of applause by a few who pretended they had been listening, and a more labored clapping by the rest of the house, induced the pianist to succumb to an encore, which was meant well, but failed to arouse any enthusiasm. The applause was more guarded this time, and although he bowed wistfully, Levinski was not afforded an opportunity to perpertrate his favorite "Music Box" tinkle. The audience began to hunt for gloves and to scramble over one another. The Quite Impossible Lady turned to struggle with the sleeves of her coat, and the Highly Improbable Gentleman had a view of her face: gray eyes, gold hair, and a mischievous mouth. Thereupon he helped her into the soft gray coat, because of the mischievous mouth. Her "Thank you," was charming; in fact the gentleman decided to leave off woman-hating temporarily.

"Not an inspiring afternoon," he remarked, by way of making conversation.

"Oh, but it's such a satisfaction to be able to know that a concert is poor. I come away positively elevated to the heights of egoism," she purred.

"Well, I must say I find it very disheartening to have to sit through my money's worth of this," and he waved a hand toward Levinski, who was still coming out to bow.

"Why no!" she protested, "All you have to do is to imagine how the music would sound if Paderewski played it, and you can hear it in your mind's ear, or wherever you hear it."

"I am afflicted with deafness in the mind's ear," he mourned. "It is exceedingly painful at times."

"You needn't laugh at me," she scolded. "It's not polite, and besides, I'm a perfect stranger."

"Quite perfect," said he, gallantly.

She scorned that, trying to edge into the aisle; but he stopped her.

"Look here," said the Highly Improbable Gentleman, "I'm in a mood. Suppose we go out to tea. Are you game?"

"Oh, always," said she, laughing, and he let her into the aisle as if he had not been blocking the way all this time.

That was how, by a freak of chance, the Highly Improbable Gentleman and the Quite Impossible Lady came to be sitting opposite one another across the candle-lighted tea table, conversing as if they had not known ecah other for hundreds of years. Here the Quite Impossible Lady had an opportunity to observe her escort more closely: rather tall, and rather thin, with rather medium colored hair, and disconcerting eyes. And because he was, as he said, in a mood, his aura could be distinguished, quite palely encircling him; now and again it flickered whimsically. She was not accustomed to auras, but being well-bred, she pretended that they were the usual thing, and made no comment.

"I shall have to take off my hat," she apologized, "to cool my head. The red gets so hot, you know."

"Gold," he corrected, "not red. I should have thought, however, that it was your reverence for the sacred institution of afternoon tea that made you bare your head."

"I loathe sacred institution,—the Salvation Army," said the Quite Impossible Lady.

"What else do you loathe?" he inquired.

"Limburger cheese and pale blue note-paper and spotted neckties and Andrea del Sarto's pictures."

The Highly Improbable Gentleman reflected with relief that he had not worn a spotted necktie. As for Andrea and the cheese, it was of course his duty to condemn the popular taste.

"And what do you like, beside concerts and Dunsany?" he pursued.

She turned up the cover of the battered book and patted it affectionately.

"That's my Bible," she said. "He leadeth me beside the waters of fairyland. He restoreth mine ancient soul. He maketh me to like everything, with the exceptions I have mentioned."

"Chopin?" he tested her.

"Not the A major Prelude nor the Minute Waltz."

He was thankful that she had not oozed, "Oh, I adore Chopin!"

"What was this ancient soul of yours like?" He had done research in the matter of souls.

"I'm beginning to think you ought to know without being told. Weren't you that charming King's overseer in Egypt in the second dynasty?"

"Do you know, it was so long ago that I had almost forgotten, but weren't you the delightful lady who was on her way to be married to the king's son? I believe you gave me something."

"A safe-conduct from the king, with a little gold seal."

"And in India you were the dancing girl," the Highly Improbable Gentleman was becoming eloquent, "and I was the beggar holy man at the gate. You gave me a handful of coins."

"What an extraordinary memory you have," beamed the Quite Impossible Lady. "Do you recall the time when you listened to the singing of the Children of Lir at Inis Gluaire? It was there my red hair was blowing in the winds of heaven."

"You gave me a white feather from your wing, Fionnuala. There were many cold storms beat upon you and your brothers in those three hundred years at Inis Gluaire."

"And only bitterness and a black grave at the end, Aibric."

"It is a strange thing to be meeting every nine hundred years," said the Highly Improbable Gentleman.

"Your aura is certainly growing brighter. I never noticed it bfeore," said the Quite Impossible Lady.

"I can't see it myself. I suppose you can't see yours either; it's quite lovely, with little green and blue flames, like a driftwood fire."

The Quite Impossible Lady sighed under the weight of the years. She pushed aside the teacup and leaned across the table.

"It's my turn again, you know," she said, "I always give you something, every nine hundred years. I suppose I shall have to part with Dunsany." And she pushed across to him the little battered volume. "Please like it. It's rather precious, and fate only knows how many years I've been waiting to give it to you." She rose to go.

"Look here," said the Highly Improbable Gentleman, "please don't go away like that. Don't you think nine hundred years deserves a longer meeting?"

She shook her head blithely. "You mustn't stop me, Methuselah, I'm always the one to go away and on. You simply wait, you know. And please don't ask my name. It won't be a bit useful, for I shall have another in the next nine hundred years when we meet again. Goodbye."

The Highly Improbable Gentleman sat alone at the tea table, fingering a battered volume of Dunsany's *Tales*, and entertaining serious doubts as to his own sanity. He was reassured when the waitress sidled up with the bill. He had not been dreaming, of course. However, the aura must have faded, for the waitress did not even notice it. He picked up the book, and stepped out into the glare of the evening lamps. ELOISE SMITH, '26.

THE CONCERT

The violin breathed out a sphere of tone,
A bubble that encompassed me entire
Enchanting me with evanescent fire
As color leapt and changed where it was blown.

The bubble rose above the crowded floor
And ever its center seemed to rise
Oblivious I was small, and its great size
Held all the multitude within its core.

JUDITH C. STERNE, 1927.

AEGINA

What is your charm, O strangely silent halls,
Your virgin marble yellowed with the years,
Your columns fallen as a flower falls,
Close pruned by Saturn's unrelenting shears?
Amid your dust some ageing cedar peers
At crumbling heaps of stone that once were walls
With all the sound and laughter that it hears—
AEgean ripples and far shepherd calls.
Where lies your charm? Your builders long are dead,
Your altars long are bare of sacrifice;
But time and ruin paint an aureole—
New wisdom over old religion shed.
Do you, O temple, share our mortal price,
That, losing life, you only gain a soul?

M. C. B., 1927.

BUTTERFLIES

I was running down to the river pool for a mid-morning swim, but I stopped as I drew near the beach. Ahead of me in a crowded cluster on the sand were nine swallowtail butterflies, apparently hard at work. I had scattered such groups many times before, merely for the love of seeing their graceful winging away at the alarm of my abrupt approach.

A sudden curiosity held me back; I wondered what might be the reason for the strange activity of that fluttering handful of yellow and black. With steady, unhurried steps, I walked gradually toward the edge of the sandy bank where the little butterflies had congregated, until they were actually at my feet. A few inches more and my foot would have touched them. After long minutes absorbed in slowly sinking to the sand, I settled myself in a fairly comfortable sitting position with the swallow-tails undisturbed and not a foot from me.

They were exquisite, frail-winged creatures with black bodies and black markings on the clear yellow wings which they held wide outspread over the desert of sand grains about them. Yet, as I looked closer, I saw how ragged and frayed the little band was. Most of the butterflies had been a long time from their chrysalises, a long time in butterfly chronology consisting of the few short days necessary to bring pathetic, tattered old age to the fleeting butterfly lives. The little wing edges of the patriarchs were broken and uneven, and their short, rounded tails had been rudely torn away by some twig or thorny briar. In contrast, the two or three young ones who worked beside them, fresh from their awakening, were so much the more beautiful in their smooth, groomed newness and undimmed colors.

A small hump of sand finer in texture and damper than the surrounding beach had been chosen as the center of activity. All nine of the swallowtails were alternately pushing their black, needle-like proboscides into the sand and pulling them up again. If the proboscis accidentally hit a sand grain instead of working around it, the slender needle bent dangerously and threatened to snap. Invariably, the butterfly cautiously withdrew it and started over again. The insects proved the possibility of doing two things at once, for they combined with their proboscial operations a continuous movement of their two front legs, apparently with the purpose of scraping away the surface particles of sand. The connection between the two actions was plain. Where the wiry legs had worked, there the proboscides were dipped into the sand. I have since been convinced that the object of their intense activity was the absorption of moisture, and that they scraped away the dry surface sand in order to get nearer the moist grains beneath.

The group of them reminded me of busy berry pickers who stretch themselves after an uninterrupted half hour of steady picking, change their camped position and wander aimlessly through the berry patch, looking for better picking grounds. Just so did the butterflies behave. At first, they worked quietly, paying little or no attention to each other. Holding their outspread wings motionless, they monotonously dipped and drew out their proboscides, and swept away the top coating of sand, dipped, drew out and swept away again. Occasionally, a worker evidently wearied of his position or exhausted the plot upon which he had been busy, and with an upward fling to his wings, sailed in a lazy, half-circle through the air a foot or so above the beach and lighted again in a new spot besides his comrades. Sometimes, he dropped upon the outstretched wings of a busy relative who, resenting the other's presence on his back, quickly clapped his wings together and forced the intruder to withdraw or be crushed in the vise-like grip of his tight-closed wings.

After a time, as the sun grew hotter on the beach, the butterflies became more and more frantic, flying by twos or threes above their comrades, circling excitedly about the hummock of damp sand and gliding swiftly down again to their old places. Their manner was entirely changed from their steady, industrious appearance a few moments earlier. Now they held their wings perpendicular to their black bodies, reminding me of a half forgotten picture where a small foreign sailing craft caught the wind in a single, bright-colored sail. Again and again, each butterfly madly drove its proboscis into the sand and furiously sent the grains flying with its feet. Perhaps instinct warned them all that their mine of moisture was rapidly disappearing under the sun's drying heat.

The new mad spirit that urged them frantically on stifled their seeming sense of ethics. I could almost see the veneer of their own little civilization slipping from them as they dropped back to more primitive codes. "Each for yourself and never mind your neighbor" was clearly at the bottom of their actions. In its desperate effort to make the most of the moisture while it lasted many a self-centered butterfly turned poacher and lawlessly shouldered a comrade aside. In a flash the two were in the air a foot or so above the ground, struggling for a brief moment with angry bodies and fluttering wings, until one or the other retreated dimmed with defeat.

During my watch, I found the little mass so intent upon itself that the outside world went its way unnoticed. The butterflies were so thoroughly centered in their own small orbit of existence that nothing short of a disastrous upheaval measured on a butterfly scale alarmed them. In fact, they were so wrapped up in their work that I reached slowly through the foot of space that separated us and picked one quietly up by its wings. It struggled for a second or two, clawing the air with its black legs, and then, recognizing the propriety of passive resistance, lay still between my fingers. On close examination, I saw how feverishly the little creature had been working; its narrow, black body had sand grains caught in the coat of soft hairs, and I half imagined that it was mildly grateful for the moment of rest forced upon it as it lay prisoned between my finger tips.

Further discoveries and speculations were interrupted by the characteristic thoughtlessness of my Boston Terrier. In her clamorous pleading for a swim, she was trotting up and down the beach, gazing first at me and then at the water. Accidentally, in her restless manoeuvers, she backed into my crowd of brilliant butterflies. A butterfly catastrophe, indeed! With a toss to their wings, they were up and away like a handful of wind-flung, yellow leaves.

LOUISE D. HUNTER, 1927.

RAIN

I hear you patter,
As your light feet pass.
I hear your rustle,
As you bend the grass:

A plain little lady,
Without any train,
A little Quaker lady,
In gray silk—Rain.

THE NEW DIMENSION

Isabel was conscious not so much of an uncontrolled quiver of the inward curves of her mouth as of a purringly comfortable sensation of fullness. Looking right past the boy across the table from her, she continued to speak through his troubled look, through the fine-spun barrier of his disapproval to the radiance that seemed to pervade even to the most remote corners of the room. He seemed, to her, an obstacle to be circumvented, the very achieving of which feat should give her yet a larger glory. Had she been speaking before a great audience she felt she could have said, "I am Isabel Anderton," and not a personality in the gathering but would have at once perceived the charm, the depth, the stateliness implied in that ringing name. As her mind swelled with the thought that the great void of unfulfilled ambition was at last filled, an utter satisfaction inundated her.

As the name receded, the barrier stood out the more starkly. Isabel became more conscious of it. With a straight look she ventured, "It is not that I am satisfied." The stagnant possibility of the thought checked her a moment. She wanted forcefully to make him believe. Then a ripple from the great wave rushed back, obscuring ever so little, the barrier. "It is that I am satisfied that I have found my niche. This is the thing that is real."

Her words dropped rippleless into the pool of his silence. She could sense his gathering rebuttal. She felt that there was a groping for delicate touches to a dynamic opposition. In the second before his reply, there was the suspense of four years, of four years of slow gathering of her conviction. The second between offered breathless hope for agreement, praise, sympathy, and precipitate drop into an abyss that was filled less with apprehension than with fear. Then he spoke.

At first there was in his words a gentleness of expression. The charming face of the girl was very much in his mind. He wished desperately to win her to his thought, yet his intense consciousness of her caused him to proceed slowly. He showed her first the smaller of his wares, wishing her to admire, if not against her will. Then, as his enthusiasm for his stock carried him along, he thought less and less of the listener, and ever more deeply of the beauty of his beloved objects. She listened, throwing all the force of her skepticism in his way. Then as he forgot her, this weapon lost its sharpness, and she became absorbed, likewise, in the beauty of what he had to show.

Before the array of genuine delights to be found in bare thought, the serenity of knowledge hard-gained, her mundane joy did not glitter. The splendor of that charming Isabel Anderton, leader of people, dwindled before the honest scorn of fame that was Robert Krife. She became so attuned to the rhythm of his sayings voice that certain of his sayings redunded with a prolonged echo, in her mind. "The agitation and the profound serenity gained of contemplation will always be the real thing to me." The conviction of his words by its sheer force and certainty burned into her thoughts.

She revived the fading glow of her earlier enthusiasm formed it, clothed it in new brightness and offered it to him again. Now she spoke directly to the boy. No larger audience existed beyond him. Hidden in her was the feeling that she must continue her defense. This was no quarrel. Interchange of ideas had always been their basis of friendship. In this vital exchange this was the first time she felt they had struck bottom. Other opinions were eerie by contrast.

"Actually, it makes no difference if our opinions are antagonistic," she said. It was her attempt to save herself.

He did not reply. Suddenly a great discomfort came over her. The subtle words that usually bridged the space between them now struck like lightning, placing a precipitate chosen lure.

Back in her college room, Isabel pondered that night. There stretched before her a possible broader road. First must come a certain renunciation. A haunting fear that the gesture might be melodramatic did not leave her. Even so—the more difficult the greater the good. The new way surely was worthy. Isabel, happy in decision, acted. The anticipation of another talk with Robert was so intense as to be almost intolerable. The privacy of her motive caused an indefinable pleasure in the possibility of sharing it.

Seated once more at the same table, there was no conversation for a long two minutes. The boiling words of each awaited a lifting of the lid by the other. This consciousness superseded the boiling itself. Isabel, retarding the happenings of their last meeting, pondered for a moment over her subsequent struggle. It came to her that it had been futile, utterly futile. Had she yielded at once, logic had been satisfied. Her final decision was inevitable.

"You will be pleased," she communicated her great news, and living suspended on her final word for his answering sparkle. It would close that chasm. Instead of the sparkle there came a flash.

"Then I convinced you—too." She, *too*, that made the immeasurable difference. Isabel felt a queer wonder at life, a very swift insight into futility. Then the chasm remained, they had merely changed places. Standing on its brink she saw the thing in its entirety. Once again she had lost her reality.

As she returned from her state of detachment, Isabel met the smile of the boy across from her, "You showed me the better way; I shall keep it." As she spoke she felt her mental terra firma return.

"I am content to see the value of ambition." A little startled Isabel smiled. This, then was their mutual ground. The better value only mattered. She wondered if there were yet more unexpected dimensions to this so simple piece of life.

JUDITH C. STERNE, 1927.

WHERE ROMANS BLED

It had been stifling all day, as only Rome, dust-laden and sun-burned could be over the feast of the Assumption. Indefatigable American tourists exchanged aggrieved reminiscences over the very superior quality of the breezes on the side-porches back home, and hopefully thumbed Baedeckers against a lowering of the temperature on the morrow. The imperial city was suffused in a sort of blazing yellowness: the air felt like hot sand to the touch.

Several sporadic assaults had been made upon the climate, only to be abandoned ultimately for the diplomatic erudition and comparative coolness of the hotel. Towards nine o'clock even conversation had become desperate. We hailed a passing fiacre, in a condition of dilapidation that would have defied the hardihood of any but a Roman coachman, but which, in Italy was still good for a generation or two.

We rumbled over cobbled streets, and through open piazzas, that still radiated little shimmering lines of heat, till finally the vast tressellated hulk of the Coliseum looming black against the blackness of the sky. A chill blue moon fell aslant, making fathomless purple shadows under those high arches, and caught in molten pools of silver in hollow. Here in this quiet place, with a sun-baked modern city forgotten behind us lay the symbol of ancient Rome, proud, omnipotent, glittering Rome. Gladiators once flung away their lives here for a people's pleasure; the cave-like depressions yonder once caged lions only less regal than the emperor. Those arches towering into the summer sky have lost little of their magnificence for all the erosion of the centuries. At such moments, when moonlight touches those crumbling tiers with majesty the rotting stones are once again clothed with a blood-thirsty, raucous populace. One hears the clash of Roman steel, the clank of Roman armor. There is a glint on long-rusted helmets, a phantom tossing of brilliant plumes: Rome is still a far-flung empire, unconquerable, supreme.

ATLAS OF THE BOOKSHELF

To endless servitude enchained,
With iron muscles stretched and strained,
The heavy weight to hold,
Twin guardians of my books you stand,
A mammoth shape on either hand,
Though cast in pigmy mould.

Rebellion fires not your eyes;
No more your heart for freedom cries
To rule the wilderness;
Each blunt bronze forehead lowly bent,
Tremendous force to service lent
Your mighty forms confess.

You jungle giants, petrified
In monumental strength, whose pride
Unending toil endures,
Hold fast my volumes' precious load,
And help me brave the roughest road
With patience learned from yours.

M. C. B., 1927.

SERENDIPITY SHOPS

You who have wandered in London have, without a doubt, felt the lure of London bookshops. Perhaps like A. Edward Newton, your love for book-collecting and your love for London have gone hand in hand. Perhaps like Newton also, you cherish the belief that Dickens' *Christmas Carol* reads better in London than elsewhere. And surely it reads better for having been bought in the "booklover's happy hunting ground," Charing Cross Road. (There was a time when Holywell Street was literally the street of books in London, but it exists now only in memory—and in Joseph Pennell's drawing.)

But London is a labyrinth of intersecting streets and there are bookshops, isolated from their fellows, found in unexpected spots. In a little slum known as Shepherd's Market, right in the heart of Mayfair, there is one, comparatively new, and yet a paragon among bookshops. "The Serendipity Shop" gets its name from an old word for Ceylon—Serendip. Horace Walpole coined "Serendipity" out of a fairy tale in which, as he says in a letter to his friend Mann, the heroes "were always making discoveries, by accidents and sagacity, of things they were not in quest of."

There is a poem called *The Ballade of a Poor Booklover*, in which that harassed gentleman naively exclaims:

"Tho frequently to stall I speed,
The books I buy I like to read;
Yet wealth to me will never hie—
The books I read I like to buy."

His grievance may be your own dilemma. Perhaps you are, as I am, perpetually in that unfortunate state. Or perhaps you have gone a step further and hold that, provided the depth of your purse is as great as your bibliophilic greed, "the buying of more books than one can peradventure read, is nothing less than the soul's reaching out after infinity." At any rate, I have at last reached my point, and am prepared to argue with you as to the advantages which second-hand bookshops have over all other types.

A dingy, queer old shop, hiding in a basement, approached by several steps, old and crumbly; within, books lining the shelves and scattered about in miscellaneous array, filling every conceivable nook; a shop in which footfalls are like echoes of past ages and one's own presence an anachronism—surely such a one is more alluring than a large, bright store in which every book is in its place. Of course the ordinary bookstore must exist for freshly published books, books which, not having been born long enough to have received the complete unction of antiquity, are not as yet available in the second-hand shops; but he is foolish indeed who buys a new book when he can buy the same book at second-hand. In Charles Lamb's words, "Thomson's *Seasons* . . . looks best a little torn and dog's-eared. How beautiful to a genuine lover of reading are the sullied leaves and worn out appearance, nay, the very odour . . . of an old 'Circulating Library' *Tom Jones*, or *Vicar of Wakefield!* . . . Who would have them a whit less soiled?" Lamb liked those editions of Shakespeare best which had been "oftenest tumbled about and handled."

If, however, you are not susceptible to this mouldy sort of bookland, you must admit the practical value of buying at second-hand. The second-hand dealer nicely avoids all the perils involved by dealings with money-making publishers. Perhaps in a moment of desperation, you have resorted to a second-hand bookshop. I venture that you have come away in love and charity with your neighbors because there is still something left to jangle in the bottom of your purse.

All novelists recognize the lure which second-hand shops, more than all others, hold. In fiction, no matter how inviting a bookshop may be, it is inevitably second-hand; I have yet to discover a single first-hand shop worthy of a place in a story. Bernardine, after the crisis of her life, returns, in *Ships That Pass in the Night*, to her uncle's second-hand bookshop. There she vigorously dusts and arranges innumerable shabby old books, in a conscious effort to shut out memory. While the old uncle continues his endless reading of Gibbon's *History of Rome*, the "dusting of the books" goes on, desperately, tragically.

The bookshop in Hugh Walpole's *Fortitude* could not have been "lighted with gas that hissed and spit like an angry cat," nor could its walls have been covered with books "that stretched into misty fog near the ceiling," if it had not been of the second-hand variety.

F. Scott Fitzgerald has a charming bookshop in one of his short stories—the "Moonlight Quill," in which the smell of musk pervades the air, "the smell half of a curiosity shop in Dickens' London and half of a coffee-house on the warm shores of the Bosphorus." The chief characteristic of this "mellow shop" is the "great squat lamp of crimson satin that, lighted thru all the day, swung overhead." Who ever heard of such a thing in an ordinary bookstore!

Christopher Morley's *The Haunted Bookshop*, with its delightful little placards tacked around in the "warm and comfortable obscurity"—"a kind of drowsy dusk"—deals entirely in second-hand volumes.

Only such shops as these are, what all bookshops should be, true Serendipity Shops. In them you will not be told, "Sorry, but we're sold out—another edition coming next month from the publisher's." In them you "loaf and invite your sold," and soon find either the book for which you are looking, or something which delights you far more than that book ever could, and makes you forget your original desire until a later day when you stumble upon it quite naturally.

It has always been a particular grievance of mine that there is no bookshop in the immortal *Alice Thru the Looking-Glass*. If there were, tho' the books read from back to front and each page from bottom to top, and tho to reach a book you must walk away from it, it would, nevertheless, be a second-hand, and a Serendipity, shop.

ELIZABETH M. ROGERS, 1926.

BUILDERS OF ILLUSION

A little labour of the hands to vest
In splendour this ephemeral trumpery,
An instant glad surrender of the best,
To gild a mask for unreality;
There stands created many a glittering scene,
Whose gold is tinsel, and whose jewels, glass;
Fantastic worlds before a painted screen,
Where slave and prince in silken raiment pass—
Pass and are gone; the shining visions fade,
And voices cease, and candles flicker low,
Then rags and purple in a corner laid,
And walls are bared of all the gallant show.
But not in vain has labour's fruit gone by:
For beauty, once created, cannot die.

M. C. B., 1927.

MORNING

Hours are laughing,
Half-light is done;
Over the high hill
Jog-trots the sun:
Bald as a magpie
Red as a jewel—
A jolly, fat friar,
Astride of a mule.

EDITORIAL

The editorial board wishes to express its gratitude to those members of the faculty who have directed the attention of students to the *Literary Supplement*, and to those undergraduates whose literary interests have prompted them to submit manuscripts to the recent competition. The sudden influx of material, following, as it did, upon a period of poverty both in copy and moral support, has encouraged the board to contemplate a publication which may show a little of the expansion in form and scope which is so apparently, and so lamentably needed. It seems plausible that the size of the *Supplement* may be increased so as to include types of work which the present limited space prohibits.

Such a move would, of course, require the assistance of all the people in the college who are, in any way, concerned with writing. It would necessitate the composition, over the summer, of such larger, more individual, and spontaneous works as academic pressure and assignments make impossible during the college year. It would demand a great number of contributions from different people in order that subjects and their presentation might be sufficiently various.

It may be, however, that the board has mistaken a sporadic movement for something more fundamental and permanent. In that case, the project will melt into one more Maeterlinckian dream. We urge the expression of college opinion on this matter.

ON LITERARY UTRA-REALISM

Milton sings of Paradise, Dante of the Inferno—each giving a geography of the place in question. Shelley on occasion skimmed so low as the clouds, and Byron sank on mountain-peaks with notable distaste for lower levels. When Walt Whitman attempted to guide people through earth, there was a Nordau at hand to shout, "Mad, Whitman was—mad beyond the cavil of a doubt!"

But writers have begun to realize Walt Whitman during the last decades. They have begun to toss a "new gladness and roughness" in the midst of men. Connected with the growth of science is the fact we are no longer content to treat, with Greek simplicity, such Gothic complexities as the character, the environment and the relations of man. One-dimensional embodiments of virtue and vice have little veracity outside the allegory. We find men, at best, to be a rather mediocre lot, with a saving grace or two for artistic balance. The fashion of fiction, then, swings to another extreme. For every Tennysonian Idyll, mystic with dim moons, and a saintly king, there are ten such books as *Crime and Punishment*, where the attic, with its tumbling cockroaches, and the unbalanced hero have the same theme: the unhappiness caused by transgressing the laws men have had to make.

Again, as the years pass, there will be written many more *Blanco Posnets* than *Hounds of Heaven*. These works, too, have similar themes: the divine love which dogs the footsteps of men, whether he will or not. Yet to how many of us can the lofty metaphor, however sublime, seem as potent as the fully rounded human, in whose reactions we can trace the same relation of thought and environment as we find in our own? Of truth in the time-worn garbs of ideal beauty, we have grown too used to saying, like the Chekhov hero, "Ah—how true! How true!" And we let it go at that. The ultra-modern setting of truth is an expression not only of the realization that good and evil are found intertwined, but also of the psychology of human attention. We are shocked into thinking.

Besides accomplishing this valuable result, ultra-realism possesses an additional asset. It widens our sympathies, putting before us conditions existing, but never before brought to our attention. This becomes apparent in such a book as Tolstoy's *Resurrection*. The woman, Marie Ivanova, is infinitely revolting at first sight; one of the last creatures whom we would have convince us of the brotherhood of man. Yet, as we go on reading the causes of her downfall, inevitable as it is tragic, a new tolerance enters us. Our province is, after all, not to judge, but to understand.

There is, to be sure, the danger of overdoing realism, to the extent that truth is obscured. It is the vehicle of cleverness and cheap sensationalism, then, rather than of truth. This is a fault of that modern group which Mr. Stuart Sherman has neatly pigeonholed as the "Emetic School" and whom we may term the Circumlocutionists because, in the manner of the Dickens "Office," they show exactly what should not be done. In this group are classed such students of "sexual disgust" as Waldo Franck, Mr. D. H. Laurence, James Joyce, Sherwood Anderson, et al. Of the Russian school the most notable example is probably Maxim Gorky. Dragging us through several acts of obscenity, Mr. Gorky sets us back exactly where we started—which is a little too much like real life to be strictly artistic. Far from doing us any good, these works leave a nasty, and ineffacable scratch on our brain. It is easy enough to be disgusted with existence without the aid of so-called art.

We must remember, however, that this type of writing represents a reaction—a negative reaction from a too positive surplus of *grande* passions, and bucolic settings. The values of realism, and ultra-realism remain unchanged by this inevitable illustration of the laws of physics and humanity.

REGRET

Regret is the loneliest thing in the world, a feeling without defense, a sadness that knows no relief. Sorrow we can bear, pain is but a temporary infliction, disappointment may be made a thing of the past, misfortune may be laughed at in the face of a new tomorrow, but regret is a bastard child of the Mother of Tears, for she brings only constant and gnawing pain, a stifled and a biting sharpness, a lingering and a poignant bitterness.

I have seen people with the leaden load of remorse in their breasts.

"Regrets fly kites in their eyes."

Each day brings the realization that for them the sun's gold is tarnished, the morning air is poisoned, the day's joy polluted by the never-ceasing throb of their regret. They are sad with a sorrow that does not come to less reflective people. They are unhappy with a grief that more careless, less cognizant mortality escapes.

This is no wistful, vainly longing regret that I mean. It is not just a repeating of "I wish" over the casket of an ill-spent past. It is a conscious realization of errors and faults, of failures and mistakes, an acceptance of blame and of incompetence, and the endurance of the pain it brings.

It is no small thing to look over your past, and say, "Here I sinned, and here I paid. Here I was weak, and there, here, a million places, my weakness rose up in terrible arms against me." This would be, indeed, the act of a Stoic, a brave man, a philosopher. To probe deep into the wounds of your soul, to discover, and having discovered, to admit and accept; this is to shoulder the blame of your life, and to shoulder, too, your part of the world's failures.

The *Literary Supplement* extends thanks to those publishers whose book-news and publications have made possible the Book-review section: Little, Brown, & Co.; G. P. Putnam's Sons; The Century Company; Alfred A. Knopf; B. W. Huebsch; Boni & Liveright.

COMMENT

Dudensing Galleries, New York. Paintings by Stella.

"Don't tell them I'm a great painter"—Mr. Dudensing quoted the artist. Take this with as many grains of salt as you please, the pictures still speak for themselves. Sometimes they seem to have a too-decorative quality, reminding you faintly of illustrations in a fairy book or bathroom tile effects, but the thought leaves you when you have looked at the *Venus* for a few moments. It seems to be done almost in pastel, yet hasn't a pastel effect at all; rather, the paints appear like colored lights, and the air and water have a bright transparence. Venus, water with the clarity of blue Venetian glass about her waist, rises from amongst brilliant fish, whose colors echo—no, not loudly—through the picture. It is painted with the idea that any section cut from it should be an independent whole, otherwise, of course, related with the rest.

Mr. Stella himself refuses to theorize about his work, calls the *Venus*, which he and most others consider his best, a fiesta, and lets it go at that. One who has to do the inadequate talking might call a certain sexless radiance the distinguishing quality; and, childlishly enough perhaps, I liked better than anything else Venus' purple hair, as perfect here as the words "wine-dark" in the Odyssey.

There was one small picture, a fish of gorgeous colors, swimming as it were in light, not water; a circular canvas, more sombre, of three swans—a great deal of blue-black and an interesting line-composition, but not nearly up to the rest; and one in which every line answers to that of a lotus: conical breast leading to pointed shoulder, the light sometimes softer yet the same as that of the *Venus*. These two paintings were lovely enough to carry the rest; the rest possibly needed no carrying. . . Mr. Stella may not be a great painter. For me his things were an event not so much because of his *style*, but because the man works in a new *temperature*.

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, NEW YORK

For a long time public sentiment had been expressing itself with sensitive national pride because Americans were so prone to turn toward Europe, with blind faith in continental taste and blind oversight of native art. It was partly actuated by these sentiments, that the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum had its inception. A group of earnest artists scoured the coast from Maine to Georgia, in search of the finest examples of American Colonial furnishings, utensils and ornaments, and have set up in the Museum a permanent exhibit that is in every way worthy of the best decorative traditions. Period integrity has been preserved by the simple device of devoting one floor to each separate architectual unity. One enters through an early 18th century Philadelphia doorway into the rather bare beginnings of American art. In many instances whole rooms have been reinstated with all their original fixtures and fittings. It is not perfect: there are several tasteless rooms, whose furniture, though artistically correct seems needlessly heavy; but for the student of the history of art there is an unmistakable sense of authenticity. Furthermore, to the sceptical lay-man it proves that there is an American art, as dignified and sincere as any European product: that our severe forefathers while creating objects primarily for use have somehow woven in a simplicity that is more than crudeness, a beauty that is more than mere serviceability.

IN BOSTON

The death of Bellows and John Singer Sargent within the winter is a great loss. At present the Boston Museum is holding a memorial exhibition of Sargent work including in the Museum's own collection some of the finest privately owned pictures in this part of the country. Concerning Sargent as an artist, the comment of an April number of the Manchester Guardian can not be improved upon.

"One of the athletes of art, a man of swift, powerful, striding talent who smashes his way through all the more obvious difficulties in the way of producing great pictures."

The Boston Art Club has opened its summer showing of the work of members. The pictures have variety but no particularly high spots. Two portraits by Albert Schmidt stand out in their striking poster like qualities—deep-toned and simple in treatment—two men of as picturesque personalities as Zuloaga's subjects.

Charles Hopkinson has two flower studies treated in a style rather different from that of his usual work. There is nothing of the conventional "flower study" in them. The treatment is decorative and yet with a free flung natural line, quick color, and easy composition.

An autumn landscape by William J. Kaula has his lovely qualities of fresh color and spacious atmosphere.

At the Vose Galleries from the 11th to the 23rd is an exhibition of the Michigan painter's, Gerrit A. Beneker's, work. Through the usual artistic mill of the Chicago Art Institute, the New York Students' League to a picture in the Pennsylvania Academy show in 1914, when the war interrupted his work as in the case of so many young artists. Now as a mature painter his work is competent in some respects but uninspired, with an intelligent use of color and technique.

The theme of the majority of his canvasses is of a distinctly Tolstoian turn—the dignity of labor, the frank open face of the honest working man. His pictures are rarely more than well covered canvas, but in *Ed Mosely, Roller*, there is a personality in gray sinister tones. As a painter of labor, the steel mill is his special field and he seems less at home in his lighter work. One picture of a child at the *End of the Story* has distinction and a charmingly wistful quality.

Benjamin Cratz' exhibition at the Casson Galleries is not exactly exciting in spite of a background of southern France, Spain and Morocco.

If we can persuade you before leaving college this June to go to the most interesting place in Boston, we shall not have died in vain. *Mrs. Jack Gardner's house*—pay days Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 10-3, Sunday free 1-4; on the Fenway, north west of the Museum.

Exhibitions now open:

Museum of Fine Arts—Paintings, Drawings and Water Colors by Sargent; Egyptian objects recently excavated by Dr. Reisner.

Doll & Richards—Miscellaneous Paintings and Water Colors; Etchings by W. H. W. Bicknell.

R. C. Vose Gallery—Paintings by Gerrit A. Beneker.

Guild of Boston Artists—General Spring Exhibition.

Boston Art Club—Members' Exhibition.

Grace Horne Gallery—Paintings by Peter Holdensen; Batiks and Drawings by Peter Hunt; Pottery by Mrs. Groom and Mrs. Hobson.

Boston City Club—Water Colors and Oils by George H. Hallowell.

School of Architecture at Harvard—Paintings by Haffner, Murphy, Warren, Conant.

Society of Arts and Crafts—Mural Block Prints by Gilbert Fletcher; Ship Models by E. W. Ottie.

Bookshop for Boys and Girls—Portraits of Children by Hilda Belcher.

Louis Joseph Gallery—Collection of Louis XVI Snuff Boxes.

Workshop—102 Chestnut St.—Painted Furniture; Paintings by Pavlosky and Miss Patterson.

Book Reviews

The Constant Nymph. Margaret Kennedy. New York, Harcourt Brace, 1925.

There is a certain glory in fighting a losing battle,—a hurt and darling pride that makes one finish the race after the winners have come in. Sanger's Circus must have felt that glory in their one great heritage, genius, genius that played a losing game to law and order and left them only the small twisted satisfaction that lives within one.

Margaret Kennedy has taken that subject dear to young writer's hearts, genius, and planted it deep in the soil of unconventionality where it is commonly supposed to thrive. She has treated it deftly and surely within its confines. Unlike many of her contemporaries she has not neglected the purpose of her novel to digress at leisure upon her own illusive and alluring thoughts.

Sanger's Circus, that is to say Albert Sanger, brilliant and erratic composer, with his equally brilliant and erratic children of various wives, live a straggling, unkempt life in the Austrian Tyrol, supported in their existence by a few devoted hangers-on, some of whom see that Sanger's music is produced and others of whom finance the children's wardrobes and their education, seduce them, and dally with his last and largest wife. Lewis Dodd, Sanger's closest friend, plays the role of quasi-hero. He has the same hard, emotional genius of Sanger and alone can appreciate and despise him as he deserves. He is possessed of a certain diabolic fascination like that of a refined Liliom, a slave to his desires and to his selfishness, and homely with that lean homeliness that is the accompaniment and asset of genius.

The children are all a curious mixture of inbred refinement and unbridled profanity, with the exception of Kate who is thoughtfully practical, and the fat, blonde baby who is loathed by all but her mama and who substitutes pink-and-goldenness for brown-wiryness, and silliness for brains. Tessa, the constant nymph, rouses in one a reluctant admiration for her childish sagacity and at the same time a wondering skepticism. She alone of the Sangers has no musical genius and she alone holds the terrific knowledge of living and playing her part accordingly. It is, nevertheless, in spite of her granted intuitive wisdom, hard to reconcile her tender age of fourteen to the subtle management of her constant lover, Lewis Dodd.

The book is undeniably sordid in background and bitter; but it cleverly divides its cynicism between the opposing forces, winged genius, and its vainglorious and disapproving parent, the so called cultured world. With all its heart-break it is still an unfeeling book. Tessa, wistful as she is, is independent. They all command our sympathy intellectually but not emotionally. It is intelligent, unaffected writing, pointed and searching analysis that is spicy without vulgarity.

Eleanor Moak, 1927.

Arrowsmith. Sinclair Lewis. New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co.

Sinclair Lewis' new novel, *Arrowsmith*, is a force that is the more powerful because it shows the growth of an author from the cruder stage represented by his earlier works. Mr. Lewis has reached a pitch of art in his last book which makes the earlier qualities, admired and enjoyed in his two previous books, seem obvious and almost cheap.

The first part of *Arrowsmith* with its *Plastic Age* college life, would be admirable for the very qualities which made *Main Street* admirable if it did not have as contrast the last part of the book. Keenness of insight, and a sincere purpose throughout all the satire, make the beginning of the book valuable. The meticulous realism of *Main Street* is found here, and the broad humorous satire of *Babbitt*. Readers who delighted in the close observation of small town life which first made Mr. Lewis famous, will find the picture of Wheatsylvania and the Tozer family a joy. No one can fail to chortle over the riotous, sane, wholesale satirizing of Mr. Pickerbaugh with "Healthette" slogans and his National Weeks,—"Old Home Week," "Write to Mother Week," and "We Want Your Factory in Nautilus Week." The humour of Mr. Lewis' satire of publicity and sentimental tosh is often effective and always enjoyable; it makes up in robustness and vigour what it lacks in subtlety and delicacy of wit.

But these qualities, excellent as they are in their way, would merely make *Arrowsmith* another American realistic novel. Instead, by virtue of the second half of the book, and of the new gifts which Mr. Lewis shows therein, this new work is an amazing achievement. From the time when Martin Arrowsmith accepts the position at the McQuirk Institute in New York, the book rises above satire, above petty, detailistic realism. Its readers get so close to real life that there is no necessity of laying the paint on a little thick,—which is unquestionably the method of even the best realistic novels. The book pulses with vital force, is vibrant with an intensity that is scientific and intellectual, but also spiritual. The great triumph of this section of *Arrowsmith* is that, through a maze of technicalities, the subject attains universality. I know nothing whatsoever about chemistry or biology, but the long silent nights in the laboratory, when Arrowsmith made experiments out of the pure joy of scientific research, thrilled me. The strength and sincerity of this investigation did more than make me want to know chemistry: it made me realize, instead, that the glorious zeal, the indefatigable curiosity of Arrowsmith were things which came near me and all I did,—which might be part of all I ever loved and worked for, though it be far afield from chemistry.

Several points demand comment because they show especially the new growth of Mr. Lewis, in depth, in power, and in the truest reality. One of these is in the love story of Martin and Leora. In these days when literary wives and sweethearts are about evenly divided between creatures of ravaging passion and dull creatures enchained by endless milk bottles, Leora is a shining reality. Mr. Lewis deserves honor for realizing that a woman's soul may be a placid place of refuge for the hectic spirit of a man, without having the woman or the love seem negative or forceless. The married life of Leora and Martin is a triumphant picture of what effect two ordinary people may have each upon the other. The inter-action of their two personalities is as simple and commonplace as all great things are.

Another increase in Mr. Lewis' power has been in the line of character drawing. Many of the people in this book, as in the others, are skillful types,—generally useful as a means of satire. Even the individualistic Tony Wickett and the exquisite Joyce Lanyon, are hardly more than exceedingly well drawn characters from a novel. Gottlieb and Sandelius are more like the other deftly-drawn and deeply interesting people than they are like Arrowsmith and Leora. These last two I would not insult by calling flesh and blood people. They are real and lasting with the reality that is universality, they are spirits so true to the eternal in the everyday that they far outstrip the trueness of personality and physical reality though they are nevertheless individuals to a marvellous degree.

Then, lastly, I should like to mention the admirable restraint which characterizes parts of this book of Sinclair Lewis, especially the last portion. It is the restraint which comes from having a vast amount to say, and yet the control to keep from saying all but the essential. Such restraint is never comparable to the sparseness of having too little to say. *Main Street* and *Babbitt* and the first few chapters of *Arrowsmith* show that Mr. Lewis could never suffer from this defect. The latter almost erred in the other direction,—but the last portion of *Arrowsmith* is a miracle of restraint. The way in which he treats the plague situation is only one striking example of the great force and pregnant dignity which has come to make the exuberance of thought and the message of Sinclair Lewis into something lasting.

K. Q. D.